



News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

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WESTERN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION TO DEDICATE NATION'S FIRST PRISON PEACE GARDEN

Grant-funded project includes greenhouse, horticulture program

TOWSON, MD (June 10, 2005)---Western Correctional Institution near Cumberland will dedicate the nation's first prison Peace Garden on Thursday, June 16 at 11:30 a.m. The garden was funded by a grant of more than \$49,000 from the TKF Foundation, an Annapolis-based philanthropy dedicated to "open spaces, sacred places." State taxpayers did not contribute to the first-of-its-kind project.

The garden features a fountain, beautiful stonework (using native Western Maryland stone), a journal for inmates to write in, benches, and plants---some grown by the inmates in a large greenhouse that was also funded by the TKF grant.

The inmate gardeners are part of WCI's horticulture program, taught by Frostburg University professor Dr. Wayne Yoder, a volunteer who says the inmates are among the best students he's ever had. The inmates who successfully complete the program will be certified, meaning they stand a good chance of getting jobs later.

"It's not about 'giving inmates something,'" says WCI Warden Jon Galley. "It's about engaging them in activities that keep them busy in prison, which keeps my staff safer. And just as critical, it gets inmates educated and trained so that when they get out, their chance of committing new crimes is reduced."

Prison social workers and the chaplain will use the garden with the inmates, who will also be allowed to go there in times of personal crisis, such as after the death of a close relative; inmates are not allowed to leave the prison to attend funerals.

WCI Volunteer Activity Coordinator William C. Jewell worked tirelessly for three years on the project. "I can't say enough about TKF, Dr. Yoder, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust, which funded the greenhouse supplies. We're really proud of it."

**GARDEN DEDICATION: THURSDAY, JUNE 16 at 11:30 A.M.
WESTERN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION, U.S. 220 SOUTH IN CRESAPTOWN**

Public Trust, Public Service, Public Safety